

## After bartending in New York's Hell's Kitchen, Bruce Willis is really cooking with Moonlighting

THE road to Hollywood superstardom sometimes depends as much on image as on talent. Cary Grant suaved his way to the top, Douglas Fairbanks swashbuckled, and Goldie Hawn giggled.

Bruce Willis is trying to reach the same pinnacle by being cool.

Willis is so cool that he showed up, 15 months ago, to audition for what would be the biggest break of his then-unillustrious career — the role of Moonlighting's brash detective, David Addison — wearing an army fatigue jacket and three earrings in one ear.

Willis is so cool that network executives who got a load of his get-up favored scrubbing the show to casting him.

"They finally let me hire him, but said, 'We don't get it,'" recalls Moonlighting's executive producer and creator Glenn Caron.

In fact, Bruce Willis is *so* cool that only his closest friends know how cool he really is, in as much as coolness dictates remaining aloof from a clamoring press.

"It's part of his aura," explains New York nightclub owner Michael Barrett. "It's cooler to turn down the Johnny Carson Show than to say yes."

Which is all fine, except that Bruce Willis is also one hot property, and his reluctance to expose himself to the public eye has created headaches for those around him.

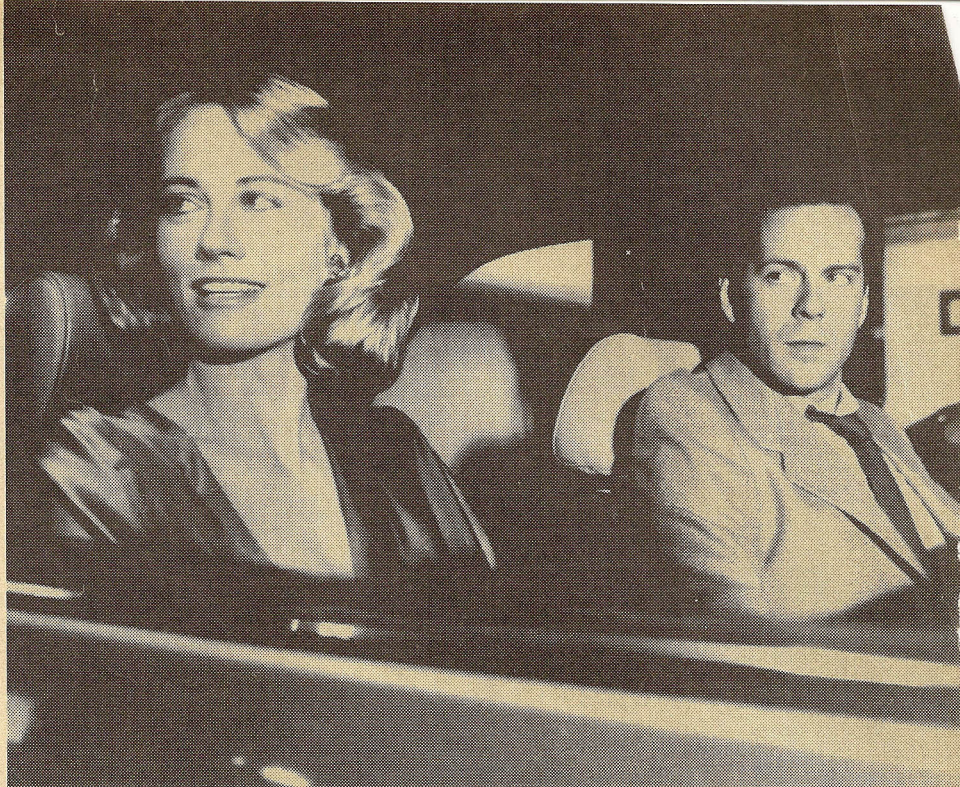
Network executives have got nowhere cajoling their star to help publicise Moonlighting.

And Willis' agent has been left to make excuses: "He's unbelievably shy. I've seen him in interviews. He gets really nervous and breaks into a sweat."

Bruce hates to be put on the spot. The reason being, he's said, that he was burned a while back by a TV interview show.

"As soon as the cameras rolled," Bruce, 30, recently recalled, "the reporter started with, 'Well, how do you like playing the ugly man opposite Cybill Shepherd?' I said, 'What?' I don't like to be put in that position where I'm going, 'Um, well, I...'"

And, as for his being the ugly man opposite Cybill Shepherd, he's not. Ugly, that is. It's just that Bruce's perpetual smirk and receding hair-line make him look more like the ageing Jack Nicholson



# KING OF

than, say, Pierce Brosnan.

Stroll down West 49th Street, in Manhattan's seedy Hell's Kitchen, and you'll pass the railroad flat Bruce lived in before moving out to Los Angeles just over a year ago to do Moonlighting.

He was "Bruno" then. A downtown boy in everything but his address, one of four kids from the uncool town of Penns Grove, New Jersey, with a reputation for flitting from one girl to the next.

And he was everyone's favorite bartender, who came carelessly dressed-to-pour in baggy pants, Hawaiian shirts and headbands.

Well, not everyone's favorite bartender. Part of what distinguished Bruno from other between-roles actors working Manhattan watering holes was the way he tried to dazzle female patrons with the same sort of lines he now bounces off co-star Shepherd.

Unfortunately, what makes for snappy romantic comedy on TV

ABOVE: Bruce Willis with his Moonlighting co-star Cybill Shepherd... "suaving his way to the top".

RIGHT: In his element in the cool, cool shade of Palm Springs palms.

didn't always leave the ladies cackling on their bar stools. "Loud, a little obnoxious, and gross" is how at least one woman remembers Bruno. "He was the kind of guy who tells you he's an actor, when you're dying to say, 'I know you're only a bartender, so shut up.'"

And, indeed, ex-boss Larry McIntyre finally warned Bruno to cut the double-entendres at a club called Chelsea Central. "He'd insult anybody — totally in jest," says McIntyre. "I got into a couple of things with him, 'cause we're sedate here. We don't have a bar lined with bimbos."

It was after hours that Bruno really became the Bruno his friends know and love. Wild and crazy. Free and easy. Cool.



**6 He was great —  
dancing and drinking,  
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"Bruno's Bruno, man," says close friend and bartender Stephen Eads. "His attitude to life is, 'Hey, let's do it!'"

Like the time Bruno whipped out one of his ever-present harmonicas and, uninvited, joined James Taylor's table for an impromptu jam session. "Taylor loved it," recalls McIntyre. "It was a late, drunken night. Bruno likes the action, the excitement."

Or the entire good-times summer two years ago that Bruno spent

# COOL!

dancing to Fifties rock 'n roll at the New York club Heartbreak.

"He was great — dancing and drinking and trying to pick up women with his dumb lines," recalls one of his friends. "He floozied around a lot."

Bruno even managed to squeeze in some acting along the way.

Remember the hard-nosed reporter in *The Verdict*? That was Bruno. Remember Aidan Quinn's friend Jim in *Desperately Seeking Susan*? That *wasn't* Bruno. In fact, he was losing that role when his agent suggested that Bruno audition for *Moonlighting*.

He took the audition and, presto, won a role which now earns him \$20,000 an episode.

Now that's cool!

But Bruno's friends find it all understandable, considering how far and fast he's come.

Before *Moonlighting* there was an appearance last year on *Miami Vice*. Then the premiere episode of *The Twilight Zone*. And a spiffy new sports car.

"He just bought a mint-condition, black '66 Corvette with a white interior," a friend says. He adds: "I guess it's a cool car for Bruce to have."





# Honey MOONLIGHTING?

## There's another Bruce in Cybill's life!

MOONLIGHTING star Cybill Shepherd is living with her chiropractor beau Bruce Oppenheim in a trial marriage — and friends predict the lovebirds will wed within a few months.

Cybill and Oppenheim had been dating for more than a year when she gave him the go-ahead just after Christmas to move his clothes and belongings into her Encino, California, home.

"I could see that now was the time to give a trial marriage a shot, and it's working beautifully," Cybill, 36, told a close friend.

"He's bright, handsome and witty, and I love him."

And Cybill's grandmother, Mrs. Tommy Shobe, revealed: "He's a very nice young man. Everybody in the family, including Cybill's daughter Clementine, loves him."

Cybill divorced seven-year-old Clementine's dad, businessman David Ford, four years ago. A couple of years later she met Oppenheim when she went to his office for treatment of a back problem.

They became friends — and just over a year ago, after Oppenheim

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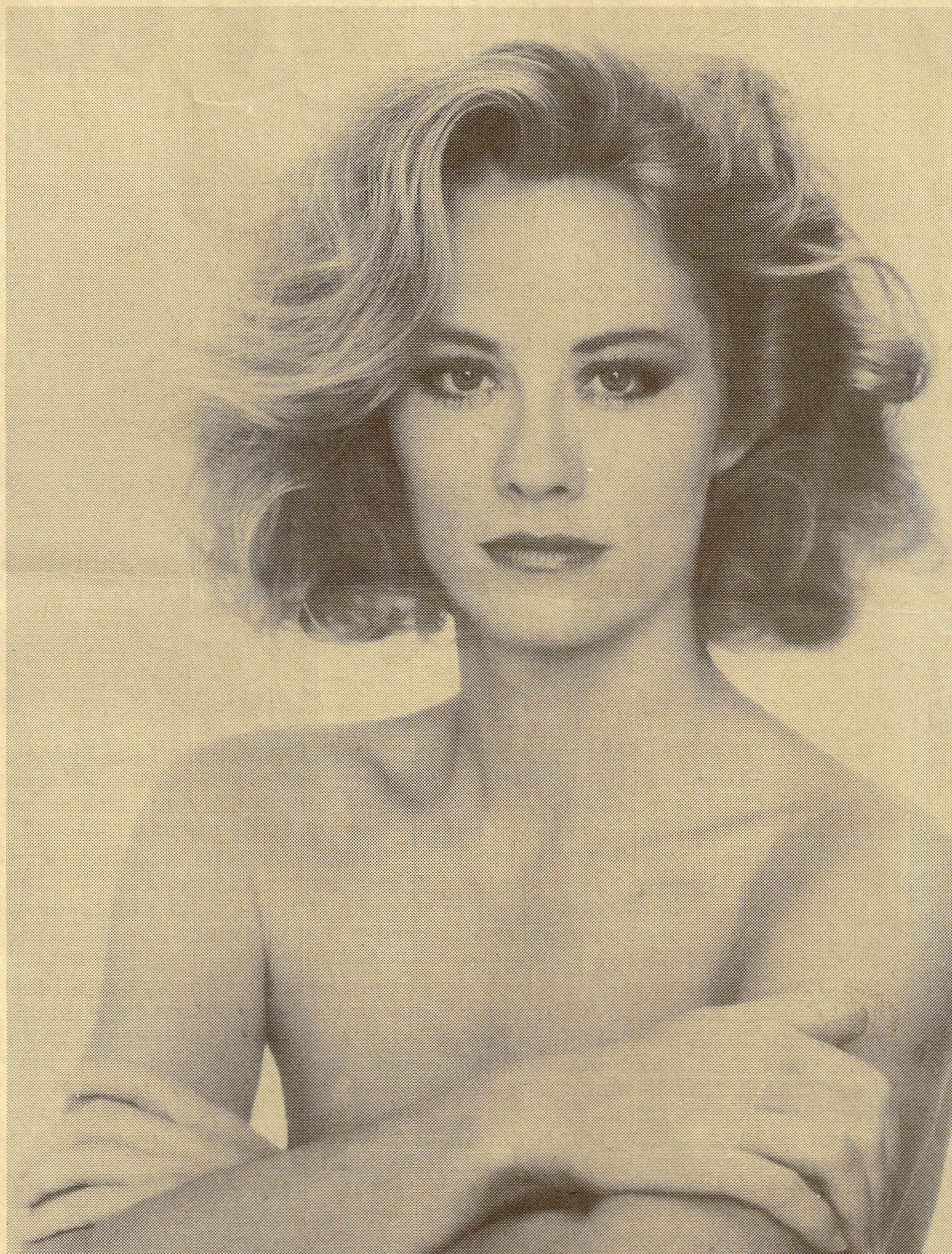
and his wife were divorced, romance blossomed between him and Cybill.

But even while regularly dating Oppenheim throughout last year, the actress was still seeing other men, say insiders.

"She was trying hard to avoid getting too pinned down," says a source close to Cybill. "But as time went by Bruce grew on her."

"By last summer they were close, and went to Europe together on vacation. They had a wonderful time."

"After they got back to Los Angeles, Bruce began getting closer and closer to Cybill's precious daughter — something



that meant a lot to Cybill. She's nuts about her little girl."

Oppenheim, who is about 40, told a friend after returning from Europe: "I really love Cybill and I can see a future with her."

But the actress continued to "play it cool" — because her collapsed marriage to David Ford, coupled with a failed live-in rela-

tionship with director Peter Bogdanovich about 15 years ago, has made her wary of making any real commitment to one man.

The source close to Cybill says the actress has told her: "Peter and David were *the* men in my life. They both broke my heart. I've had enough of living with men for a lifetime!"